

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR WESTERN WISCONSIN COUNTIES

SEPTEMBER 2001



In Most Western Counties, Unemployment Rates Fall

August Local Labor Scene

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the **La Crosse Metropolitan Area** increased 0.1 of a percentage point in August to 3.4 percent. The August 2001 rate was unchanged as compared to the La Crosse Metro rate for August 2000.

The unadjusted unemployment rate for Western Wisconsin was unchanged in August, holding steady at 4.1 percent. However, unadjusted rates in seven of the eight Western counties fell, the only increase in Western Wisconsin unemployment rates was in Monroe County, with an increase of 2.2 percent. A surge in Monroe's August unemployment rate is typical, in the year 2000 Monroe's rate increased 1.6 percent, and in 1999 the rate increased 1.3 percent. This year, the number persons employed in Monroe County and the size of the labor force declined, which contributed to the higher rates. In Monroe County, the number of temporary jobs held in and around Fort McCoy start to decline in late summer and fall, as the annual training season comes to a close. The reasons why Monroe's increase was particularly sharp this August, were twofold; an abrupt shutdown of the Valley Pride meat processing plant in Norwalk and several durable goods manufacturers who did not call back workers after their annual July shutdown/clean up. The workers laid off in these July temporary shut downs in Monroe were traditionally called back in August. Some of these workers may not be called back until the end of the year.

While Monroe stood out as the only Western County with a decrease in the number of employed residents and a increase in its monthly unemployment rate, declines in the size of the labor force were spread throughout much of the eight county area. What happens in August, the height of summer, that causes the size of the labor force to decline? Generally, students begin to prepare to return to school, especially college students. Jobs with recreation de-

partments, camps, and summer education end in August. And, finally, families take summer vacations and teenagers quit jobs to join them. Because these summer jobholders leave the labor market when they leave jobs, there is no increase in the number of unemployed in the local labor force. In fact, unemployment declined in seven of eight Western Counties and at the state level in August as jobseekers moved in to fill some of the jobs vacated by students.

The State of Wisconsin awarded a \$250,000 to the Cabela's unit in Prairie du Chien. The facility in Prairie du Chien is mail-order retailer/area distribution center. Cabela's also has a retail outlet in Crawford County. The grant will assist Cabela's in their 10.6 million dollar expansion project and will create about 75 new jobs within the next two years.

Statewide

The state's seasonal unemployment rate declined in August by 0.1 of a percentage point. The rate was up a full percent as compared to last August. Wisconsin's nonfarm wage and salary jobs dropped to 2,850,800 from 2,853,900 in July. The number of jobs was also down from one year ago, when the total number of jobs was reported at 2,857,300. Statewide manufacturing totals were down 29,300 from last August.

National Bits

The national seasonal unemployment rate increased to 4.9 in August, up 0.4 percentage points from July's 4.5 percent. The 4.9 percent reading in August was up by 0.8 percentage points from last August's 4.1 percent.

A Thought

As Wisconsin Governor Scott McCallum said on September 11th, "Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims and their families."

Labor Force Estimates (Seasonally Adjusted)			
	LaCrosse MSA*	Wisconsin (000s)	United States (000s)
Current month: Aug 2001			
Civilian Labor Force	75,600	3,046.7	141,350
Employment	73,000	2,917.0	134,393
Unemployment	2,600	129.7	6,957
Unemployment rate	3.4%	4.3%	4.9%
Change from one month ago			
Civilian Labor Force	900	-9.5	(424)
Employment	700	-5.3	(986)
Unemployment	100	-4.2	562
Unemployment rate	0.1%	-0.1%	0.4%
Change from one year ago			
Civilian Labor Force	2,100	99.9	626
Employment	2,000	78.3	(546)
Unemployment	100	21.6	1,172
Unemployment rate	0.0%	1.0%	0.8%

Note: All estimates are preliminary and based on place of residence.

* La Crosse MSA Statistics include Houston County Minnesota

Western Wisconsin Employment Scene: August 2001

	Buffalo	Crawford	Jackson	Juneau	LaCrosse	Monroe	Trempealeau	Vernon	Region	Wisconsin
Civilian Labor Force*	8,410	10,851	12,970	11,018	63,339	21,576	15,474	14,952	158,590	3,079,134
Employed	8,161	10,467	12,542	10,184	61,333	20,159	14,881	14,404	152,131	2,957,882
Unemployed	249	384	428	834	2,006	1,417	593	548	6,459	121,252
Unemployment rate	3.0%	3.5%	3.3%	7.6%	3.2%	6.6%	3.8%	3.7%	4.1%	3.9%
Total, all industries**	5,057	8,185	9,173	9,160	69,450	17,762	12,786	8,470	140,043	2,850,766
Construction & Mining	157	249	1,136	359	2,880	684	433	413	6,311	140,278
Manufacturing	310	1,927	1,017	2,761	9,750	2,885	5,522	966	25,138	595,951
Transportation & Public Utilities	1,949	233	711	323	3,150	1,100	601	344	8,411	134,437
Wholesale Trade	179	179	111	193	4,720	905	414	502	7,203	139,844
Retail Trade	669	2,494	1,475	1,695	13,940	4,066	1,504	1,749	27,592	506,839
Finance,Insurance,Real Estate	157	207	233	239	3,040	617	322	387	5,202	153,753
Services	825	1,940	1,322	1,608	22,470	2,954	1,958	2,236	35,313	799,610
Government	811	956	3,168	1,982	9,500	4,551	2,032	1,873	24,873	380,054
Change from previous month										
Civilian Labor Force*	-49	-36	-32	-45	-30	-330	-185	17	-690	-48,376
Employed	10	29	28	-29	81	-794	-50	37	-688	-31,627
Unemployed	-59	-65	-60	-16	-111	464	-135	-20	-2	-16,749
Unemployment rate	-0.7%	-0.6%	-0.5%	-0.1%	-0.2%	2.2%	-0.8%	-0.1%	0.0%	-0.5%
Total, all industries**	129	103	118	72	860	-595	68	56	811	-3,150
Construction & Mining	-1	-2	15	7	-10	-13	-12	0	-16	-628
Manufacturing	2	-13	-8	-37	-70	-495	21	-5	-605	-1,757
Transportation & Public Utilities	134	2	11	4	-10	-2	16	-6	149	627
Wholesale Trade	-6	-1	1	3	40	-12	-13	-12	0	459
Retail Trade	3	108	3	35	-80	40	12	6	127	2,626
Finance,Insurance,Real Estate	0	-1	-1	-1	40	-4	5	-1	37	-388
Services	8	14	27	-22	150	-58	19	9	147	429
Government	-11	-4	70	83	800	-51	20	65	972	-4,518
Change from year ago										
Civilian Labor Force*	559	616	1,161	496	1,825	1,326	576	958	7,517	97,623
Employed	478	541	1,079	346	1,655	1,102	506	887	6,594	76,069
Unemployed	81	75	82	150	170	224	70	71	923	21,554
Unemployment rate	0.8%	0.5%	0.4%	1.1%	0.2%	0.7%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%
Total, all industries**	233	110	519	6	440	344	-112	87	1,628	-6,526
Construction & Mining	4	10	145	3	-20	42	11	17	212	-907
Manufacturing	-13	-135	27	-218	-980	-256	-117	34	-1,658	-29,298
Transportation & Public Utilities	221	61	-14	-3	70	-12	20	5	348	1,590
Wholesale Trade	-6	2	-1	-24	280	72	-6	-7	309	-1,516
Retail Trade	36	304	12	-1	230	500	-26	32	1,087	2,138
Finance,Insurance,Real Estate	-0	5	-7	4	300	28	3	14	347	3,618
Services	9	52	152	-20	460	-75	-40	123	661	15,340
Government	-17	-190	205	265	100	46	43	-131	322	2,509

* Includes participants residing in area.

** Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted.

Current month estimates are preliminary.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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